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SEATTLE STREET TREE PLANTING PROCEDURES

GENERAL INFORMATION

The City of Seattle encourages the planting of trees along public streets. A property owner may plant a tree in a street planting strip if he or she first obtains a permit from the City Arborist's Office. There is no charge for the permit, but the procedure allows the city Arborist to review the type of tree and the planting location. After you receive the permit to plant, you will be responsible for properly planting and maintaining the tree. This includes watering during the drier seasons, mulching and pruning.

Besides selecting a tree for aesthetics, please consider the following before you plant:

- In most cases, the Arborist only approves the planting of trees when there is a curbed roadway and a minimum five foot wide planting strip.
- Trees must be planted to the following standards:
 - ⇒ 3½ feet back from the face of the curb.
 - ⇒ 5 feet from underground utility lines
 - ⇒ 10 feet from power poles (15 feet recommended)
 - ⇒ 7½ feet from driveways (10 feet recommended)
 - ⇒ 20 feet from street lights or other existing trees.
 - ⇒ 30 feet from street intersections.

Before You Plant, Know What is Already in the Ground

Please call 1-800-424-5555 to request the location of all underground utilities. **They** will mark your planting strip for the location of your water, electric and gas lines. You can confirm the location of your side sewer through the Department of Construction & Land Use (684-5362). This is located on the 20th floor of the Seattle Municipal Tower Building (700 – 5th Avenue). Knowing these locations in advance may save you time and money by preventing an accident from occurring when you dig to plant your tree.

For additional tree information, you can access our page on the internet at:

<http://www.cityofseattle.net/td/arborist.asp>

Tree resources

Center for Urban Horticulture	206-685-8033	Classes, library
Department of Neighborhoods	206-684-0464	Tree Planting Grants - Matching funds
International Society of Arboriculture	1-800-335-4391	Arborist referral Or www.pnwisa.org
PlantAmnesty's Heritage Tree Prog.	206-783-9813	Heritage Tree Information
Seattle Transportation Tree Steward Program	206-684-5008	Classes, project assistance
Washington State DNR Tree Link	1-800-523-8733	Urban forestry information hotline,
WSU Master Gardeners	206-296-3440	Plant ID, disease and insect information

STREET TREE SELECTION PROCEDURE

- Refer to the “*Recommended Seattle Street Tree Planting List*” for a listing of trees generally recommended for planting within the planting strip area. The list includes a variety of tree shapes and sizes. Please be aware this list concentrates on hardy and readily available tree species. There are other trees that you could use. Please note your selection on the form, and the Arborist will review your request.
- Choose only small scale trees when planting underneath power lines.
- Seattle Transportation’s policy regarding spacing, is to provide the optimum canopy cover for the streetscape. The City recommends planting all small-scale trees between 20 - 25 feet apart (measured from the center of the tree). Small/Medium scale trees should be planted 25 – 30 feet apart; Medium/Large scale trees should be planted 30 - 35 feet apart; Large-scale trees should be planted between 35 – 40+ feet apart. **All spacing shall be a function of mature crown spread, and may vary widely between species or cultivars.**
- There is no need to meet the Arborist on site. If you have particular concerns, you may note them on the planting request form. Be specific and the Arborist will address your concerns when he visits the location. If you have questions you may call 684-5047.

PROHIBITED STREET TREES FOR SEATTLE

City Ordinance No. 90047 names the following trees as prohibited:

- ⇒ Acer Macrophyllum (Bigleaf maple, Oregon maple).
- ⇒ Populus trichocarpa, P. deltoides (Cottonwoods).
- ⇒ Populus Nigra (Lombardy poplar).

These species have aggressive roots. The wood of some species is brittle and breaks up in wind.

MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY

In accordance with City Ordinance #90047 Title 15 Street Use Code, it will be the responsibility of the property owner to maintain the tree(s) in perpetuity. Please refer to the “*Seattle’s Urban Forest*” brochure for more information.

RECOMMENDED STREET TREE PLANTING SCHEDULE - SEATTLE, WA

Small Trees: Appropriate Under Lower Powerlines. Good For Planting Strips With Limited Space

Botanical name Common Name	Height in feet	Spread in feet	Flowers	Fall Color	Comments/Notes
<i>Acer ginnala</i> 'Flame' Amur Maple	20	20		red	Select or prune for single stem; can be multi-trunked.
<i>Acer grandidentatum</i> 'Schmidt' Rocky Mt. Glow Maple	25+	15		intense red	
<i>Acer griseum</i> Paperbark Maple	25	20			Smooth, peeling, cinnamon colored bark.
<i>Acer palmatum</i> Japanese Maple	20	24	small red	yellow, orange, red	Hundreds of varied cultivars. Can be slow growing.
<i>Acer platanoides</i> 'Globosum' Globe Norway Maple	20	18		yellow	Rounded top, and compact growth.
<i>Amelanchier grandiflora</i> 'Princess Diana'	20	15	white	bright red	Good for limited space.
<i>Amelanchier x grandiflora</i> 'Autumn Brilliance' Serviceberry	20	15	white	bright red	Reliable bloom.
<i>Cercis canadensis</i> Eastern Redbud	25	30	red	yellow	Blooms before leaves are out.
<i>Cornus kousa</i> 'Chinensis' Chinese Kousa Dogwood	20	20	white	reddish to scarlet	Most resistant to disease of the dogwoods.
<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i> 'Johnson' Leprechaun Ash	18	16		yellow	A miniature in every way.
<i>Magnolia x loebneri</i>	20	20	large white	yellow	Several cultivars.
<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i> 'Little Gem'	15	10	white	evergreen	Usefull where larger varieties are inappropriate.
<i>Malus</i> 'Adirondack'	18	10	white		Red fruit. Excellent scab resistance.
<i>Malus</i> 'Red Barron'	18	8	red	yellow	Good for narrow spaces. Red berries.
<i>Malus</i> 'Golden Raindrops'	18	13	white	yellow	Abundant yellow fruit.
<i>Parrotia persica</i> Persian Parrotia	30	20	Showy Stamens	Yellow - orange red	Select or prune for single stem; can be multi-trunked.
<i>Prunus</i> 'Frankthrees' Mt. St. Helens Plum	20	20	pink		Purple foliage.
<i>Prunus</i> 'Newport' Newport Plum	20	20	light pink	reddish	Purple red foliage.
<i>Prunus cerasifera</i> 'Krauter Vesuvius' Flowering Plum	30	15	pink		Upright growth, darkest foliage of the plums.
<i>Prunus</i> 'Snowgoose' Snow Goose Cherry	20	20	white		Upright when young, spreading when older.
<i>Prunus serrulata</i> 'Amanogawa' Flowering Cherry	20	6	pale pink double	bronze	Particularly useful for very narrow planting strips.
<i>Prunus x yedoensis</i> 'Akebono' Flowering Cherry	25	25	pink	yellow	

RECOMMENDED STREET TREE PLANTING SCHEDULE - SEATTLE, WA

Small/Medium Trees: Appropriate Under Higher Power Lines (management required to maintain clearance under lower power lines). Good For Standard 5' Planting Strips

Botanical name Common Name	Height in feet	Spread in feet	Flowers	Fall Color	Comments/Notes
<i>Acer campestre</i> Hedge Maple	30	30		yellow	
<i>Acer campestre</i> 'Evelyn' Queen Elizabeth Maple	35	30		yellow	More upright branching than the species.
<i>Acer truncatum</i> x <i>A. platanoides</i> 'Kiethsform' Norwegian Sunset	35	25	yellow	yellow-orange/red	
<i>Acer truncatum</i> x <i>A. platanoides</i> 'Warren's Red' Pacific Sunset	30	25	yellow	yellow-orange/red	
<i>Arbutus</i> 'Marina'	25	15	pink	evergreen	Good substitute for Pacific Madrone. May exceed 25' height under some site conditions.
<i>Crataegus crus-galli</i> 'Inermis' Thornless Cockspur Hawthorn	25	30	small white	Orange to scarlet	Red persistent fruit.
<i>Crataegus</i> x <i>lavalii</i> Lavalle Hawthorne	28	20	small white	bronze	Thorns on younger trees.
<i>Crataegus phaenopyrum</i> Washington Hawthorn	25	20	small white	scarlet	Thorny.
<i>Koelreuteria paniculata</i> Goldenrain Tree	30	30	bright yellow	yellow	Midsummer blooming.
<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i> 'Victoria'	25	20	White	evergreen	
<i>Malus</i> 'Tschonoskii'	28	14	White	scarlet	Sparse green fruit, pyramidal.
<i>Prunus</i> x <i>hillieri</i> 'Spire'	30	10	pink	orange red	
<i>Pyrus calleryana</i> 'Capital' Pear	35	12	White	reddish purple	Smaller than 'Aristocrat', may break up in snow.
<i>Pyrus calleryana</i> 'Aristocrat' Pear	40	45	White	red	
<i>Pyrus calleryana</i> 'Redspire' Pear	35	25	White	yellow to red	Pyramidal.
<i>Pyrus calleryana</i> 'Autumn Blaze' Pear	30	25	White	scarlet	Vigorous.
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i> 'Mitchred' Cardinal Royal Mt. Ash	35	20	white	rust	Bright red berries.
<i>Sorbus</i> x <i>hybridia</i> Oakleaf Royal Mt. Ash	30	20	white	rust	
<i>Styrax japonica</i> Japanese Snowbell	25	25	white	yellow	Plentiful, green 1/2" seeds.
<i>Tilia cordata</i> 'De Groot' Linden	30	20		yellow	Compact, suckers less than other Lindens.

RECOMMENDED STREET TREE PLANTING SCHEDULE - SEATTLE, WA

Medium/Large Trees: Not Appropriate Under Wires. Approved For Planting Strips 5' or larger. (Wider planting strips recommended where space allows).

Botanical name Common Name	Height in feet	Spread in feet	Flowers	Fall Color	Comments/Notes
<i>Acer freemanii</i> Autumn Blaze Maple	50	40		orange	
<i>Acer nigrum</i> 'Green Column' Green Column Maple	50	20		yellow to orange	Good close to buildings.
<i>Acer platanoides</i> 'Columnar'	40	15		yellow	Good close to buildings.
<i>Acer platanoides</i> 'Emerald Queen'	50	40	yellow	yellow	
<i>Acer platanoides</i> 'Parkway'	40	25	yellow	yellow	
<i>Acer rubrum</i> 'Bowhall' Bowhall Maple	40	15		yellow orange	
<i>Acer rubrum</i> 'Karpick' Karpick Maple	35-40	20		yellow to orange	May work under very high powerlines with arborist's approval.
<i>Acer rubrum</i> 'Scarsen' Scarlet Sentinel Maple	40	20		yellow orange	
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> 'Atropurpureum' Spaethii Maple	40	30		not significant	Leaves green on top purple underneath.
<i>Aesculus x carnea</i> 'Briotii' Red Horsechestnut	30	35	large 10'' red clusters	no	Resists heat and drought better than other horsechestnuts.
<i>Carpinus betulus</i> 'Fastigiata' Pyramidal European Hornbeam	35	25		yellow	
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i> 'Dawyck Purple' Dawyck Purple Beech	40	12		no	Purple foliage.
<i>Betula jacquemontii</i> Jacquemontii Birch	40	30		yellow	White bark makes for good winter interest.
<i>Fraxinus oxycarpa</i> 'Raywood' Raywood Ash	35	25		reddish purple	
<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i> 'Patmore' Patmore Ash	45	35		yellow	Extremely hardy, may be seedless.
<i>Fraxinus americana</i> 'Autumn Applause' Ash	40	25		purple	
<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i> 'Urbanite' Ash	50	40		deep bronze	
<i>Ginkgo biloba</i> 'Autumn Gold'	45	35		yellow	
<i>Ginkgo biloba</i> 'Princeton Sentry'	40	15		yellow	Very narrow growth.

RECOMMENDED STREET TREE PLANTING SCHEDULE - SEATTLE, WA

Medium/Large Trees cont.: Not Appropriate Under Wires. Approved For Planting Strips 5' or larger.
(Wider planting strips recommended where space allows).

Botanical name Common Name	Height in feet	Spread in feet	Flowers	Fall Color	Comments/Notes
<i>Nothofagus antarctica</i> Southern Beech	50	35		none	Rugged twisted branching and petite foliage.
<i>Oxydendron arboreum</i> Sourwood	35	12	white, not noticeable	red	Consistent and brilliant fall color.
<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i> Shademaster Honeylocust	45	35	not noticeable	yellow	Do not confuse with 'Sunburst'.
<i>Quercus</i> 'Crimschmidt' Crimson Spire Oak	45	15			Hard to find.
<i>Quercus Ilex</i> Holly Oak	20	20			Prune to keep small, leave it alone to grow large.
<i>Prunus sargentii</i> 'Columnarus'	35	15	pink	orange to orange red	The cherry with the best fall color.
<i>Prunus cerasifera</i> 'Thundercloud' Plum	20	20	light pink		Dark purple foliage.
<i>Tilia americana</i> 'Redmond'	35	20	fragrant	yellow	Pyramidal, needs water.
<i>Robinia x ambigua</i> 'Idahoensis' Pink Idaho Locust	35	25	rose pink	yellow	Fragrant flowers.
<i>Tilia cordata</i> 'Chancole' Chancellor Linden	35	20	not noticeable	yellow	Pyramidal.
<i>Tilia cordata</i> 'Greenspire' Greenspire Linden	40	30		yellowish	Symmetrical, pyramidal form.

Medium/Large Trees: Not Appropriate Under Wires. Approved For Planting Strips Greater Than 5'.

<i>Acer saccharum</i> 'Legacy' Sugar Maple	50	35		yellow or orange/red	Limited use - where sugar maple is desired in standard planting strips
<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i> 'Festival' Festival Sweetgum	40	20		yellow, orange/red	Light green foliage.
<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i> 'Worplesdon' Worplesdon Sweetgum	40	25		purple orange	finger-like leaf lobing
<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i> 'Arnold' Tulip tree	40	10		yellow	Good next to buildings.
<i>Quercus coccinea</i> Scarlet Oak	50	40		red	
<i>Quercus robur</i> English Oak	50	40		yellow-bn	
<i>Quercus robur</i> 'fastigiata' Skyrocket Oak	45	15		yellow-brown	Columnar variety of oak.
<i>Quercus rubra</i> Red Oak	50	45		red	
<i>Zelkova serrata</i> 'Greenvase' Green Vase Zelkova	50?	40	not noticeable	orange	Vigorous.
<i>Zelkova serrata</i> 'Village Green'	40	38		rusty red	

RECOMMENDED STREET TREE PLANTING SCHEDULE - SEATTLE, WA

Large Trees: Not Appropriate Under Wires. Approved For Planting Strips Greater Than 5'.

Botanical name Common Name	Height in feet	Spread in feet	Flowers	Fall Color	Comments/Notes
<i>Acer saccharum</i> 'Bonfire'	50	40		bright orange red	Fastest growing sugar maple.
<i>Acer saccharum</i> 'Commemoration'	50	35		orange to orange-red	Resistant to leaf tatter.
<i>Acer saccharum</i> 'Green Mountain'	45	35		red to orange	
<i>Cercidiphyllum japonicum</i> Katsura Tree	40	40		Yellow to orange	
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i> Green Beech	50	40		bronze	Silvery-grey bark.
<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i> Tulip Tree	60	30	yellow- greenish	yellow	Fast-growing tree.
<i>Nothofagus antarctica</i> Southern Beech					
<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i> Tupelo	70+	20	not noticeable	Apricot to bright red	Handsomely chunky bark.
<i>Platanus x acerifolia</i> 'Liberty (Island)'	50	45		red	
<i>Platanus x acerifolia</i> 'Yarwood' Yarwood Planetree	50	40		yellow- brown	High resistance to powdery mildew.
<i>Quercus bicolor</i> Swamp White Oak	100	80		varies	Shaggy peeling bark
<i>Quercus palustris</i> "Crownright"	80	40			More upright form of Pin Oak.
<i>Ulmus</i> 'Homestead' Homestead Elm	60	35	not noticeable	yellow	
<i>Ulmus</i> 'Pioneer' Pioneer Elm	60	50	not noticeable	yellow	Resistant to Dutch elm disease.

TREES RECOMMENDED WITH RESERVATIONS

- ⇒ *Albizia julibrissin* (silk tree, mimosa). Vulnerable to fatal canker attacks in Seattle.
- ⇒ *Betula alba* (white birch, weeping white birch). Regular aphid infestations - probably will not kill the tree, but sticky “honeydew” drips and makes a mess. Do not plant where people park their cars. Note: Many trees get aphids, birch is always more heavily attacked.
- ⇒ *Catalpa*. Brittle wood. Roots are tough on sidewalks.
- ⇒ *Crataegus oxyacantha* a.k.a. *C. laevigata*. (Including Paul’s Scarlet and several named varieties). Has aphid problem. Some cultivars are especially susceptible to the black spot fungus, which may defoliate the tree by July.
- ⇒ *Gleditsia triacanthos* (honey locust). Thorny – select only named cultivars, such as “Shademaster”, “Skyline” or “Imperial”. Plant in wide planting strips.
- ⇒ *Juglans nigra*, *J. regia* (black walnut, English walnut). Messy fruit. *J. nigra* roots are destructive.
- ⇒ *Liquidambar styraciflua* (sweetgum). Roots are particularly destructive to sidewalks. They need an especially wide planting strip. Using named cultivars may lessen sidewalk conflicts.
- ⇒ *Platanus spp.* (London plane, sycamore). Destructive to paving, roots heave sidewalks. May invade sewers; best with wide planting strips or cobble paving. They are susceptible to anthracnose diseases.
- ⇒ *Quercus paulustris* (pin oak). Lower limbs keep growing downward, and require lots of pruning when used as street trees. ‘Crownright’ is a variety that should be used to avoid this problem.
- ⇒ *Sophora japonica* (pagoda tree). In Seattle, it is highly susceptible to canker attack, which is often fatal.
- ⇒ *Ulmus americana*, *U. parvifolia*, *U. pumila* (American elm, Chinese elm, Siberian elm). American elm is highly vulnerable to Dutch elm disease. This disease is expected to kill the elms in this area. Newer disease resistant varieties may be approved for street planting. Chinese and Siberian elms have brittle wood, and are prone to storm damage.
- ⇒ *Conifer trees* are not typically recommended for standard 5’ foot wide planting strips associated with residential street planting. The lower limbs can cause visibility/safety problems at driveways, alleys, intersections, signs, and signals. The planting of Conifers is encouraged on appropriate private property sites.

TREES PROHIBITED FOR STREET PLANTING IN SEATTLE

- ⇒ *Acer negundo*, *Acer saccharinum*, *Acer macrophyllum* (boxelder, silver maple, and big leaf maple). Break badly in storms.
- ⇒ *Ailanthus altissima* (tree of heaven). Roots are invasive, brittle wood, suckers freely, (produces new trees off of the root system, which may create a maintenance problem in the yard).
- ⇒ *Alnus rubra* (red alder). Brittle wood. Favorite of tent caterpillars.
- ⇒ *Malus*. Fruiting apples. Fruit on walks
- ⇒ *Prunus*. Fruiting cherries. Fruit on walks
- ⇒ *Pyrus*. Fruiting pears. Fruit on walks.
- ⇒ *Populus spp.* (Poplars). Tops are brittle and break up easily in storms.
- ⇒ *Robinia pseudoacacia* (black locust) Thorny, brittle.
- ⇒ *Salix spp.* (willows, including weeping). Roots are particularly hard on sewers.

Please fill out this application and return to us at: City Arborist, Seattle Municipal Tower Building, PO Box 34996, 700 – 5th Avenue #3900, Seattle, WA 98124-4996. Fax number, 206-615-0899.

When we receive your application we will make a site visit and mark out where trees can be planted safely and correctly.

Usually the wait time for a permit is two weeks from getting the applications.

STREET TREE PLANTING QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____

Mailing Address (include zip code): _____

Phone: _____

Planting address if different from mailing address: _____

SITE AND UTILITY INFORMATION

1. Do you own the home at the planting location? _____

2. What is the width of your planting strip? Measure from the inside edge of the curb to the edge of the sidewalk. _____

3. Does your planting strip have overhead telephone and/or power lines running parallel to the curb? _____

4. What is the ground cover on your planting strip (grass, gravel, dirt, concrete etc..)?

5. How many, and what kinds of trees are you proposing to plant (Refer to Tree Planting Standards).

Quantity

Species

Choice A. _____

Choice B. _____

**Please show the outline of house
Locations and property addresses.**

Typical Sidewalk Area

Typical Planting Strip Area

Street Name: _____

Where relevant, please indicate (on the map) the approximate location of the following items by using the symbols that are listed below.

- ☐ **Existing Tree**
- ☐ **Existing Tree to be Removed**
- ☐ **Desired Location of tree(s) to be planted**
- ☐ **Fire Hydrant**
- ☐ **Street Light**

If a driveway exists, please draw its approximate location in relation to all other existing site features